

firstly the want of fodder in the rains when large areas are under water, and the cattle cannot forage for themselves on account of the crops, and secondly the insect pests, which in some parts of the district necessitate fires being lit at night to protect the cattle from insect bites. Large numbers of cattle from Bihār on their way to the big cattle markets of the Rājshāhī Division are fed in the *tāl* and *dūbās* in the cold weather, regular *batans* or encampments being formed. Some attempts have been made to improve the local breed by up-country bulls, but the resulting calves are poor, being long-legged and weedy. There seems no doubt that the only way to improve the general stamp of the cattle is by selection of the best local bulls and improved feeding. Buffaloes, which are largely used for cultivation in the *bāṛūd*, are nearly all foreign bred. The horses are the usual country ponies and there are large numbers in the district. Sheep are reared in small numbers, and pigs are common, being kept by Sonthals, Mal Pahāriyas, Doms and other low caste Hindu tribes.

From 1906 the District Board has maintained a Veterinary Assistant, at English Bāzār, and a hospital. The Assistant is largely employed in touring. The chief diseases are rinderpest, hæmorrhagic septicæmia, and foot and mouth disease. The number of in-patients treated annually at the hospital is about 60 and out-patients 1,400, almost all bovines.

VETERINARY
ASSIST-
ANCE

CHAPTER VI.

NATURAL CALAMITIES.

NATURAL
CALAMITIES

THE chief natural calamities to which the district is exposed are floods, drought, and hailstorms. Owing, however, to the difference between the character of the country and consequent cultivation on opposite sides of the Mahānandā, the conditions which give rise to general scarcity in one half of the district tend to give a good outturn in the other half.

FLOODS

Recent years of high flood were 1871, 1885 and 1906. These floods result, not from local rainfall, but from an abnormal rise in the rivers, of which the most important is the Ganges. Most of the rivers and streams which flow through Mālda take their rise in the northern mountains, and are therefore peculiarly liable to sudden freshets caused by the melting of snow and excessive rainfall in the hills. The crops damaged are the *bhādoi* and *āghani*, particularly in the *diāra* and the lower portions of Tulshihātā and Kharbā thānās. Much damage is also done to the mulberry, as a flood renders the leaf useless for feeding the silk-worm. As a rule floods are not accompanied by direct loss of human life or cattle. The main loss to property, other than standing crops, is, that in the *diāra* tracts the floods cause changes in the main stream of the river, with the result that areas of cultivated and homestead lands are cut away by the river, and the inhabitants of whole villages are reduced in a night to the position of landless labourers. On the other hand, of course, new *chars* form, and the layer of silt which a high Ganges flood deposits everywhere ensures as a rule good crops for several succeeding years.

The towns of English Bāzār and Nawābganj are protected by embankments. In 1885 owing to floods in the Ganges relief measure, were necessary in parts of Kālīachak, Sibganj and Nawābganj from September to November; 42,491 persons were relieved gratuitously at a cost of Rs. 11,579, and 6,944 persons were provided with work.

During the floods of 1906 the price of rice rose to 6 seers per rupee, and it was found necessary to advance a lakh of rupees under the Agriculturists' Loans Act. The price of rice was high on account of the unusual demand from East Bengal as

the crops were good in the *bāring* portion of the district which is too high to be flooded.

The parts of the district which suffer from drought are the high winter rice lands of the *bāring* and parts of the Sibganj, Kālīāchak and Kharbā thānās. No precise information is available of the extent to which the district has been affected by drought and famine before 1874. It is, however, mentioned in the life of Dr. Thomas, the first Bengal missionary, that in 1787 he and the East India Company's Officers at English Bāzār bought children at 6 annas each, to prevent their being sold into slavery by their famished parents.

DROUGHT
AND
FAMINE

In the famine year of 1865-66 the price of common unhusked rice rose to Rs. 2 8 per maund.

In 1873 the rainfall was 27·26 inches, or half the normal, the deficiency being spread over every month, with a total cessation of rains in September. The result was, harvests of about half the normal crop of *bhādon* and *āghani*, and of one-fourth of the high-land winter rice. In May 1874 rice rose to 9 seers per rupee. For the relief of distress 3,946 tons of rice were stored in the district, of which 1,315 tons were distributed in charitable relief, 1,253 tons sold for cash, 243 tons paid in wages, and 907 tons advanced on loan. Rupees 26,951 were distributed in charitable relief, Rs. 1,06,762 paid as wages on relief works, and Rs. 48,450 advanced on loan. The number of persons charitably relieved rose from 1,036 in the middle of April, to 6,340 in the middle of May, and 13,009 in the middle of July, but fell to 4,458 in the beginning of September, and to 469 in the first week of October.

Though the population has nearly doubled, and that mainly in the *bāring*, since 1874 there has been no serious distress and in the years of short rainfall, 1885, 1899 and 1908, little relief was necessary.

It is rarely that there are two successive years of short rainfall in the *bāring* and the inhabitants of that part are in the habit of keeping stocks of grain: there has also been a steady increase of *boro* and *bhādon* cultivation in the *bils*. The probabilities are, however, that as the inferior lands continue to be brought under cultivation with the increase of population, the liability to local scarcity will increase, and make it necessary, and profitable, to protect cultivation by irrigation from tanks, as the value of land increases.

It may be mentioned that in the west of the district there is a local saying that Mālda can never starve as it lies between the *Bārā* and the *bāring*. This means that it is not likely that

both these portions of Bengal should experience a simultaneous failure of winter rice and both are easily accessible from the *diāra*.

HAIL
STORMS

Hail storms are common during the months of April and May and sometimes do considerable damage : two storms of exceptional severity were those of 1865 and 1907.

That of 1907 occurred at 11-30 A.M. on April 1st. It struck the district from the Sonthal hills on a front of two miles southwards of Mānikchāk and extended to Bholāhāt lasting for half-an-hour. Practically every leaf in its path was cut away : the wheat fields were totally destroyed, and the ears buried in the ground : the mulberry bushes and mango trees were stripped, and *kalcha* houses unprotected by bamboo groves, unroofed and wrecked. Some 19 persons were killed, chiefly by falling houses, and numbers were wounded by the hailstones, necessitating the deputation of itinerant hospital assistants. Birds, monkeys and dogs were killed in large numbers, and the loss of human life would have been greater but for the fact that the storm came at the time of midday meal, when people had left the open fields.

CHAPTER VII.

RENTS, WAGES AND PRICES

RENTS are for the most part paid in money. There has been no regular survey and settlement of the district, and the figures for rents are taken from typical estates.

SYSTEM
OF RENT
PAYMENT

In 1842 the prevailing rates were found to be Re. 1 per *bigha* (1,600 sq. yds.) for homestead land, 4 annas per *bigha* for two-crop land, and 3 annas per *bigha* for winter rice land. In 1872 the prevailing rates were found to be for two-crop land 8 annas to Re. 1-4 per *bigha*; winter rice land 2 annas to 8 annas per *bigha*; *boro* land 8 annas to Rs. 3; one-crop *rabi* (cold weather) land 3 annas to 10 annas; mulberry from 8 annas to Re. 1-8; orchard land 10 annas to Rs. 3; the higher rates prevailing in the centre of the district and towards the south and west. In 1888 the prevailing rates in the Chānchāl estate, the largest in the north of the district, and at that time under the Court of Wards, were Rs. 3 for homestead land, Re. 1-8 for garden land and land adjoining to homestead, 8 annas to Re. 1 for paddy land, giving for an average holding of 15 *bighas* an all-round rate of 13 annas per *bigha*.

Rents and
prices

At the present time the prevailing rates are Rs. 4 for homestead land; 12 annas to Re. 1 for winter rice land; 8 annas to 10 annas for *boro* land; Re. 1 to Rs. 4 for mulberry land and for mango land; 8 annas to Re. 1-8 per *bigha* for two-crop land; 4 annas to 10 annas per *bigha* for one-crop *rabi* land.

The rates at which the inferior land which remains is now being taken up for regular settlement, are:—Annas 12 to Re. 1 for low land and clearance rates for a period of years of annas 4 to annas 6 for jungle high land of the *bārind*.

The figures show progressive enhancement of rent, but the rates are on the whole not high. The rates for *raiya* holdings, which comprise the bulk of the land, are generally the lower and the lands are sub-let at much higher figures.

The ordinary forms of produce sub-letting are the *adhiār* and the *trikhatti*, by which the cultivator is provided with seed and plough cattle and gives half the produce and two-thirds of the produce, respectively, to the landlord. Sometimes two-crop land is let out to different *adhiārs* for each crop.

With the increased population and consequent demand for land, holdings have become defined, but formerly large areas of inferior land were cultivated irregularly on the system of *hāl hāsi* tenure, by which a tenant paid rent only on the area which was found to be under cultivation by him for that particular year.

Another form of rent payment by tenants, which was common in the west of the district but is now extinct, was that known as *pauran*, by which the tenant bound himself to pay fixed quantities of produce independently of the outturn.

The *thuku* or *miyādi* holding is merely a lease for a term of years. Leases in this form are frequently taken from holders with *raiya* rights to safeguard the landlord against claim for holdings at fixed rents on the ground of long established occupancy, and also to incorporate *abwābs* of long standing with the rent to prevent the amounts being disputed subsequently.

RENT COLLEC- TION

The ordinary method of rent collection by the larger zamindars is by means of *naibs* and *gomāstas*; the *naib* is in charge of a circle, with *gomāstas* under him. The *gomāstas* are generally local men of some standing who collect from the villagers through the landlord's *mandal*. The *mandal* is paid a small sum and gets a remission of rent, or land at a low rate (*mandalini*) for his services; in big villages it is not unusual for other *raiya*s to be appointed to assist the *mandal* under the name of *tanki-navis* (accountant) or terms of similar meaning. Such men would also be paid small sums, or hold lands at lower rates.

In case of recalcitrancy the tenant would be sent for to the local *naib*'s cutcherry and asked to pay, the last resort being to the civil court.

Abwābs.

Payments of various sorts are generally made to the inferior zamindari officials, increasing the incidence of the rent. Increased acquaintance with the provisions of the Tenancy Act, and the increased prosperity of the cultivator, which allows him to resort to the law courts, tend to prevent illegal enhancement of rents. The tenant may agree to pay a *chanda* (subscription) to meet special expenses of the zamindar, but will not allow it to be shown as rent on his receipts.

The economic doctrine held by members of the reformed Mahomedan sects is that the earth is the gift of God and man is made for God's service. Man should live by agriculture, otherwise by serving others he would neglect the service of God, as laid down in the Koran. He is therefore entitled to hold land at a reasonable rent. In practice this makes the tenant resist exactions. The Sonthals also, who have cleared new lands

insist on paying clearance rates, even when the land is fully cleared, and form combinations to fight reasonable enhancements.

Besides agricultural rents, other sources of income of the landlord are from fisheries, from jungle produce and grazing rights, from ferries and from markets. Collections are generally farmed. Mention may be made of the local customs by which the last two are protected. In the case of ferries, by the toll for landing on the zamindar's property or mooring boats to it, and in the case of markets, by the toll demanded on sales made outside the market limits.

The questions of right of transfer, and the right to cut trees of value, as opposed to merely jungly trees, left in the Bengal Tenancy Act to be determined by custom, have been brought before the courts for most of the *parganās* of the district, and generally decided against the tenants. The landlord is generally able on transfers of holdings to outsiders to obtain a fee not less than one-fourth of the value of the property transferred.

CUSTOMS
OF LAND-
HOLDING.

The constant alluvion and diluvion in the *diāra* with the resultant want of fixity in holdings has led to special customs to meet local conditions. The landlord is by custom allowed to give washed-out tenants suitable land for their homesteads from that in possession of other tenants, giving these latter a reduction of rent. Measurements are also frequently made of holdings to settle the acreage held. In case of destruction of the houses by flood or fire, the relatives of the persons suffering the loss provide him with new houses. When new land forms, the village takes settlement through the *mandal*, and ploughs it jointly, the produce being divided according to the number of ploughs of each household, until the land has become reasonably permanent. The desire to maintain occupancy rights owing to increased profit of land is, however, leading tenants to continue to pay rent for diluviated land. Such diluviated land is bought and sold even when it is part of the river. The landlord's interest is for the land to be abandoned and new formation to be settled as *khās khāmār* (private property of landlord) at rack rents. The result is that there are agrarian disputes over newly formed land which are complicated by settlements with different sets of tenants from different landlords, who hold shares, or who claim to do so.

Diāra
CUSTOMS.

The scale of wages commonly paid is printed in the B volume published separately as an appendix to this volume. Although the population has almost doubled within four

WAGES
AND
INCOME.

decades, it cannot be said that there is a full supply of labour available, and the figures given are mainly of value only with regard to agricultural labourers.

In 1888 a detailed economic enquiry was made in villages Malatipur, Samjhia and Nabagram of Chānchāl estate in the north of the district. These villages were chosen as representing the mean between the richer lands of the south, and the poorer lands of the east, of the district. It was found that for agricultural labourers the average wage per day was 2 annas for men, and for boys one anna, with two meals of the value of 9 pies and 6 pies, respectively, while for harvesting one-sixth of the grain was given to the reaper.

For servants engaged by the year the rates were Rs. 21 for men and Rs. 9 for boys, with food to the value of Rs. 24 and Rs. 18, and clothes to the value of Rs. 2-4 and Re. 1-15, respectively.

The rates have about doubled in 20 years, and the average wage of the present day is for adult male labour about one rupee for three days' work of two *belas*, with some slight refreshment. The high price of rice has also led to the increasing abandonment of the custom of paying reapers in kind. For work such as jute steeping the rates are generally higher and go up to 8 annas per day.

The prices of yearly labour have risen in proportion; such labourers generally take their wages in advance for two or three years and execute a bond to work for that period. They are mostly young men who start life in this way, or persons who have become involved in debt.

The day labourer has regular field work for about six months in the year and in the mulberry fields almost continuously. Their position is not bad, as is evidenced by the fact that very little local labour was available for the construction of the railway line in the years 1904—08, although they were years of high prices. In fact, most of the labourers hold some land in addition to that on which their houses are built, and persons who are merely day labourers are mainly to be found amongst immigrants such as Southals, Pahārias and Bihāris.

INCOME OF
AGRICUL-
TURALISTS.

With the enquiry into the wages of agricultural labourers an enquiry was also made in 1888 into the income of an ordinary holding of 15 bighas and a family of 5. They show, after allowing for the food of the family, the rent, and for ordinary household expenses, a net cash surplus of Rs. 12 per year. In this calculation Rs. 35 is allowed for cost of cultivation, though in practice the main part of the work would be done by

the tenant and his family. Recalculating the figures according to the price of produce prevailing during the quinquennium 1906—1911, the surplus would be about Rs. 60.

For good security in zamindari property the rate of interest varies from 6 per cent. to 12 per cent. in the case of large and otherwise satisfactory loans. For the ordinary cultivator, loans against land and crops are generally given at from one pice to two pice per rupee per month. Other systems of borrowing are advances of grain to be repaid at harvest time, with half the amount of the loan as interest : or the crop may be sold in advance, the cultivator binding himself to sell his produce at a fixed rate to the lender.

Money
rates

Most of the people have dealings with the money lender and a succession of bad seasons will land them in difficulties. In this way numbers of occupancy *rāiyats* in the scarcity of 1874 became *ādhdārs* of their lands, particularly in the poorer parts of the *bārind*. On the whole, however, it cannot be said of recent years that the population is becoming more indebted. There is a good deal of solidarity in the village under the *mandal* and it has not been to the interest of the money lender to push matters to extremes. Present prices, and the increased profits of land, are, however, making it increasingly worth while for the money lender to foreclose on his mortgages, and lower the status of the cultivator to that of a labourer. This, however, simply means that the holder of land prefers to spend the credit that has suddenly accrued to him, rather than retain his old standard of living, and strengthen his financial position. Unfortunately the principles of co-operation have made little headway, though loans on joint security under the Agriculturists' Loans Act are readily taken.

There is one small Co-operative Credit Society in the *khās mahāl* at Panchanandpur, working without much success. It would appear that a better field for co-operation is to be found among the most depressed industrial classes, such as weavers (*Jolahas*) and silk reelers.

Co
operative
societies

The variations of prices of food stuffs in seers for the rupee appear from the following table : —

| | 1858-64 | 1870 | 1890 | 1910. |
|-----------------|---------|-------|-------|-------|
| Common rice ... | 37·69 | 30·06 | 15·74 | 13·58 |
| Wheat ... | 40·00 | 21·26 | 17·74 | 11·25 |
| Maize ... | 74·12 | 40·00 | ... | 26·35 |

The figures represent mainly export prices at the river *maria*. Practically all the inferior rice such as *dhādoi* and *bore*

rice is consumed in the district by those who raise it, as also the greater part of the wheat and barley and maize; and it has to be borne in mind that the bulk of people support themselves on the produce of their own land, storing rice for that purpose. For winter rice, the *didra* people, during the cold weather, go with hundreds of carts to the *bārind* and beyond, to cut paddy or buy it in exchange for *kalai* and money, at low rates, on the ground. It is brought home and husked by women and the surplus sold for export. The improvement in communications, and the opening up of Bengal, with the consequence of effective markets makes it increasingly worth while to grow for export. The result is that of recent years much money has gone into the pockets of the cultivators. This, and the demand for labour, has attracted the serving castes to the land, to the detriment of the middle class non-agriculturist. The latter now finds it difficult to get domestic servants. His income has not increased commensurately with prices, and the cultivating and labouring classes being now able to compete with him for articles of food such as fish, goat's flesh and milk, he has become distinctly worse off in comparison with former times. The limited number of people of this class, however, in this district has not made the problem of their adjustment to the new circumstances so acute as in other places.

CHAPTER VIII.

OCCUPATIONS, MANUFACTURES AND TRADE.

As in the other districts of Eastern Bengal, agriculture is the main industry, 68·8 per cent. of the population being dependent on it. Of these 40 per cent. are actual workers, including 185,379 rent payers, 60,118 agricultural labourers and 2,464 rent receivers. The commercial and professional classes comprise only ·5 and ·9 per cent. of the population, respectively, whilst industry supports 18·9. Of the industrial population 54 per cent. are actual workers, including 20,127 silk-worm rearers, silk reelers and weavers; 23,730 rice pounders; 9,756 fishermen and fish dealers; 5,132 cotton cloth weavers, besides barbers, washermen, gold, silver, copper, tin, and brass smiths, thatchers, potters, leather workers and boatmen. The remaining population includes 24,490 general labourers and 3,559 beggars.

TRADE
AND COM-
MERCE.

The comparatively high percentage of industrial workers is silk mainly due to the silk industry, which is the staple of the district. Hunter writes that there can be no doubt that there was silk in these parts during the reign of the last Hindu dynasty at Gaur. It appears that *pattu-bastra* (silk cloths) were then exported to the important cities of Dacca, Sonargaon and Saptagrām. The Mahomedan conquest is traditionally reported to have caused the manufacture to dwindle away, owing to some religious prohibitions against the wearing of silk. Soon after the desertion of Gaur the industry revived, or, as the native account puts it, silk-worms were brought back to the Mahānandā by one Sita Basini of Jalālpur. It is also recorded that in 1577 one Sheik Bhik, who used to trade in Māldahi cloths, set sail for Russia with three ships laden with silk cloths, and that two of his ships were wrecked somewhere in the neighbourhood of the Persian Gulf. At the beginning of the 17th century the Dutch had an establishment at Old Mālda and it has already been mentioned that the East India Company had an agency in 1686 in the district. At the present time the actual making up of the raw material into cloth is a small industry and the main industry is the production of raw silk. Unlike the neighbouring districts of Rājshāhi and Murshidābād,

where cocoon rearing has lost ground, there is no reason for thinking that it has receded in Mālda. The criterion is the quantity of land devoted to mulberry cultivation, and it would appear that the area of this land has doubled within the last twenty years. The number of silk-worm rearers is 34,596. The three divisions of the industry are cocoon raising, silk reeling, and cloth weaving. Cocoon raising is essentially a small-holding industry and each rearer is in actual fact a small independent capitalist. He has in addition to his agricultural land a few *bighas* under mulberry, and every year he considers the question as to whether he shall sell the leaf or raise his own cocoons. If he decides on the latter course he will go to Bīrbhūm or Murshidābād to buy seed, though of recent years such seed is increasingly put on sale by seed raisers at the various centres of the trade. It is found that seed raised locally is more susceptible to disease.

The worms are of the following varieties—(i) Nisteri or Purani or Mandraji (*Bombyx Crossi*), (ii) Chota Palu or Desi (*Bombyx fortunatus*), (iii) Bara Polu (*Bombyx tentia*), (iv) China Polu (*Bombyx Surenais*), and (v) Bula Palu—all multivoltine varieties. Of these the first two are the most common, the *Desi* giving the cold weather crop and the *Mandrāji* that of the hot weather. The worms are kept in bamboo trays placed in layers in a bamboo rack and fed twice a day; they begin to spin after 35 or 36 days and the cocoon is completed in three days. There are three main crops of cocoons or *bands*—named after the months in which they ripen. The chief *band* is that of November, comprising the Aghani, Māghi, and Fālguni *bands*; next in order comes the Chait (April) *band* and then the Baisakhi, Jyesthi and Bhādoi. In good years, or when the ordinary *bands* are affected by adverse conditions, other crops are raised, similarly named after the months in which they ripen. The work of rearing the worms is largely done by women.

In reeling cocoons, a small quantity is placed in a basin of hot water to loosen the thread. The operators stir the cocoons round with a piece of stick held in the right hand, and after they have absorbed a certain amount of steam, the operator picks up the loose ends of the thread with his left hand and removes sufficient of the outside covering to enable the silk to reel without interruption. Then carefully taking the threads of 5 to 8 cocoons (according to the quality of the cocoons and the size of the thread desired to be reeled), he threads them through a small hole made in a T-shaped iron, which is fixed at the

head of the basin, and from this takes the thread on to the hand reel (*ghāsi*), which is turned by a second operator, usually a boy. As a cocoon becomes exhausted, the thread from a fresh cocoon is thrown on to the moving line. The silk pulled off before the cocoon is reeled and that left after reeling are known as *chasam* and *chera* respectively, and both are valuable by-products. They are spun like cotton, as also are the pierced cocoons. From this spun silk the *matka* cloth is made.

It will be seen that the plant required for reeling is of the simplest, merely a basin over a fire-place or a copper, a T-shaped iron, and a reel.

Silk reeled according to the European method is known as filature silk, whilst that according to the native method is known as *Khamru*. The difference is, that in filature silk evenness of size throughout the skein, elasticity of thread, colour, and appearance, are looked for, whilst in *Khamru* reeling so much importance is not attached to these qualities. The result is that from a maund of cocoons which will produce two to three seers of filature silk, nearly half a seer more of *Khamru* can be reeled.

A large number of rearers reel cocoons on their own *ghāis*, specially those of the Puro caste. There is however in English Bāzār and Bholāhāt a large population of professional reelers who buy cocoons from the cultivators.

The chief markets at which cocoons are sold are Amāniganj, Subulpur and Jalālpur; and at the first of these a turnover of Rs. 10,000 on *hāt* days is common and a turnover of a lakh of rupees has been known. Buying is chiefly done by brokers (*daldāis*). To be a successful buyer implies a long experience of the trade and the ability to judge to an ounce the output of raw silk from a sample of cocoons. The price of cocoons varies with the silk market and the competition is between the European and *Khamru* markets. The European market is in the hands of French and English firms who have buying centres and agencies in the district. A small quantity of the cocoons purchased by them are reeled locally at the factories at Bholāhāt and Bāraghariā, but the greater portion is reeled in the neighbouring districts of Murshidābād and Rājshāhī, where labour is cheaper. The *Khamru* market is largely controlled by Mārwarīs of English Bāzār. The professional reelers contract to supply them with raw silk against advances, and the lack of capital, which this system implies, tends to keep the reelers impoverished and at the mercy of the capitalists. The raw silk of the *Khamru* market is exported largely to Nagpur,

Madras and up-country. The best trade conditions for the producers of cocoons are an active competition between the European and the *Khamru* market, but of recent years there has been a marked and progressive falling off in the buying for the European market, due to the increased output of China and Japan. The annual production of cocoons in the district is about 80,000 maunds, and the value of raw silk produced about thirty lakhs of rupees. A reeler in an European filature earns Rs. 8 to Rs. 9 a month, and a winder, usually a boy, Rs. 5 per month. The corresponding wages for *Khamru* silk workers are Rs. 6 to Rs. 10 per month for reelers, and Rs. 4 to Rs. 6 for winders.

Silk
weaving

It has been mentioned that the weaving of silk cloth is a very old industry. Mr. J. N. Gupta, I.C.S., thus describes its present position: "In Mālda, silk *sāris*, *dhuties*, handkerchiefs, sheets and pieces of coating are manufactured. Fine silks, *sāris* and *dhuties*, 15 feet by 44 to 46 inches, sell at from Rs. 10 to Rs. 15 per piece, and silk *thāns* for coatings sell at Rs. 20 to Rs. 25 per piece of 10 yards, the width being 44 inches. Silk sheets used as wrappers in winter, 9 to 12 feet in length and 4 to 4½ feet wide, sell at Rs. 25 to Rs. 28 per pair. Besides these, *uranis*, or *chudders* used in summer, made of fine threads, length 9 feet, and width 4½ feet, are also manufactured, the price per piece being Rs. 5 to Rs. 7.

"In Mālda there are two important centres, one at Shāhpur close to English Bāzār, and the other at Sibganj. At Sibganj there are nearly 140 families of silk weavers with 180 looms, of whom nearly 50 families weave *matka* and the rest *garad* of pure silk. Some parts of the loom used and the shuttle are imported from Bīrbhūm; a complete loom costs nearly Rs. 12. There appears to be some division of labour among the Sibganj silk weavers, the selection of yarn, its spinning, laying the warp, and the actual weaving being done by different classes of people. Most of the weavers in Sibganj are exclusively employed in this industry; very few have recourse to agriculture in addition. It is reported that the manufacture of silk fabrics has received an impetus from the *Swadeshi* movement, but what the exact increase in trade has been cannot be definitely ascertained. The total value of the fabrics manufactured at Sibganj is estimated at about a lakh and a half of rupees, including Rs. 5,000 worth of *matka*. No ornamental work is done, except in weaving borders of the *sāris*. The *sāris* are sometimes dyed locally, violet, yellow, and red, but the colours are fugitive. The yarn is dyed, either

at Fulbāri and Shāhpur near English Bāzār or Khagra in Murshidābād. The *matkas* are sent to Murshidābād plain, are coloured there, and sent to Madras and Bombay. At Shāhpur there are nearly 200 families. Here *gulthushi*, *bulbul chasm* and other patterns of mālā silk cloth are woven, the weft being of cotton while the warp is silk. There are about seven families who can dye the yarn locally, and cloths valued at about half a lakh of rupees are annually exported to Bombay, Ahmedabad and Nepal. *Udu*, *gulthushi* and *bulbul chasm* are sold locally from Rs. 3-8 to Rs. 8 per *thān*, *kadam-fuli* from Rs. 12 to Rs. 16.

"Silk weavers, like cotton weavers, are also largely in the hands of Mahājans, but their condition is more prosperous than that of cotton weavers. The silk Mahājans are generally weavers who have raised themselves to the head of the profession, and employ the poorer members of their guild to weave for them, and make advances of both materials and money to help the artisans to be kept supplied with the necessities of life. The percentage of weavers who are dependent on Mahājans can be judged from the fact that in Sibganj, where there are 150 families of weavers, there are only 10 families of weavers who do their own business, and out of these some three are guild merchants. The Mahājans generally advance thread to the weavers, and when the cloth has been woven it is weighed, a certain percentage being allowed for wastage. *Bani* (or price of weaving) is paid according to the quality and size of the cloth woven and it varies from Rs. 3 to Rs. 7 per piece.

"The daily earnings of weavers varies from annas 4 to 8 per day, but as they do not work all the days of the month, their average earning, may be put down at 5 annas per day. But women and boys earn about 2 annas and 1 anna and 6 pies, respectively. The weavers of the *matka* fabrics, in which the materials are cheap, and for which the demand is greater, earn bigger wages, which amount to 6 to 8 annas a day."

The records of the East India Company teem with instructions to their agents to send better samples of silk and to improve the dyeing, the natural colour of Bengal silk being yellow. It may be mentioned that there were riots amongst the silk weavers of Spitalfields against the introduction of Bengal silk into England, owing to the difficulty of weaving it as compared with Turkey silk, on account of the unevenness and the frequent breaking of the yarn. It was not, however, until the Company obtained possession of Bengal that systematic

Modern
history of
the silk
industry

efforts were made to improve on native methods of reeling. In 1757 Mr. Wilder was sent to Bengal to examine into the causes of the defective quality of Bengal raw silk. Shortly after, the filature system was introduced by the help of a Frenchman, and the first silk filature factory of any importance in the district was built by Mr. Udney at Singatola. In 1770 Mr. Henchman built the Residency House of English Pāzār as a manufactory for *sufeddā*, or lace work on cloth. It was subsequently turned into an ordinary silk factory. Mr. Henchman is said to have first introduced the weaving of cloth from silk alone. The original Māldahi cloth was of cotton and silk, but now-a-days the old names of *bulbul chasm* (nightingale's eyes), *chand tara* (moon and stars), *mazchar* (riplets of the rivers), *kalin-tardākshi* (pigeon's eyes), which are derived from the different patterns woven, are commonly applied to the cloths made of silk, as well as to the mixtures. As a result of these efforts local history has it that there was a boom in the silk trade between 1760 and 1790, when the Company was able by means of Bengal silk to compete with the imports into England from Turkey of raw and manufactured silk. With the decline of competition from Turkey, that from France and Italy grew and the trade declined. Dr. Buchanan Hamilton in 1810 found it greatly depressed. The subsequent course of the trade in the district is, as has been indicated above, an almost complete diversion of the industry into the production of *Khamru* silk for the Indian market and filature and waste silk for the European market.

In recent years attempts have been made by Government and the Bengal Silk Committee to stimulate the production of cocoons; trained overseers were deputed to the Juars to instruct rearers how to use microscopes for the detection of diseased seed, and seed-raising establishments for the supply of pure seed, under Government supervision, have been established in Rāj-shāhī and Murshilābād. The system of itinerant overseers has now been discontinued, and instead, sons of silk-worm rearers are given scholarships to the Sericultural School at Rāj-shāhī, and if they go through the course successfully they are supplied with capital to start them in business as seed raisers. By these measures the district has been largely saved from diseased seed, the chief source of loss, and the industry appears to be on a sound footing so far as the production of *Khamru* silk is concerned.

The most important centres of cotton cloth weaving are the Kalāshak thānā and round Kāligām in Khārbā thānā. In the

first mentioned place *sāri* lengths, *chudders* and a sort of napkin are produced in fairly large quantities, the ordinary country loom being used. In Khārbā thāñā the speciality is coloured *mashdries* (netting). The industry has declined owing to the competition of factory goods, but shows signs of revival under the influence of the *Swadeshi* movement. It is purely a cottage industry and most of the weavers have agriculture as a secondary occupation. Dr. Buchanan Hamilton mentions that in 1808 the ordinary cloth in use in the district was *ganī* (jute) or cotton. At that time cotton of a yellowish tinge is said to have been produced in the north of the district, but the cultivation has entirely died out.

At the District Board weaving school boys are trained to use improved looms both for silk and cotton, but hitherto there has been no demand for these looms from weavers.

The custom of the mango trade is that the growers do nothing to place their products on the market. The gardens are sold to the buyers as they stand, as soon as the fruit is set, the trade custom being for one-third of the purchase price to be remitted if for any cause the crop fails. The fruits are picked by means of hand nets and will keep for from 17 to 18 days; during the season the ghāts at English Bāzār and the neighbourhood are thronged with boats, especially from Dacca, and the fruit is exported by country boats, steamer and rail, to Dacca, Calcutta, Murshidābād and other places. The value of the export trade in an average year would be from 8 to 10 lakhs of rupees.

Mango
trade

Practically no winter rice being grown in the *diāra* tracts every cold weather large numbers of carts go from this part of the district, both to the north and to the *bārind*, as well as to Dinājpur and Rājshāhī districts, to buy winter rice. This is husked in Nawābganj and the *diāra* tracts, giving employment to a large number of women. In the case of scarcity in the *bārind* supplies are got from the *Rārī* districts.

Rice
pounding

The trade is chiefly centred in English Bāzār and Nawābganj, the number of persons dependent on it being 2,161, of whom 653 are actual workers. The articles turned out are chiefly household utensils, of a weight of about 10,000 maunds and the produce is exported all over the province, large quantities being sold at the annual fairs in the Rājshāhī Division.

Brass and
bell metal.

This is a small industry which appears to have been established by Sonthai immigrants during the last 30 years. The tree chiefly used for the propagation of the insect is the *ber* or *kai* (*Mangifera zizuba*).

Lac.

Saltpetre

A few families in the north of the district up till recently earned a livelihood by extracting saltpetre from saliferous earth by the ordinary process used by the Nunias.

Fish

The most important fisheries are those of the Ganges known as the Islāmpur Gangapath. There are numerous other *jalkars* all over the district in the rivers and *bils*, and the annual value of the fisheries may be estimated at one lakh of rupees. The custom is for the tenantry to be allowed to fish the *jalkars* for the small fish left after the professional fishermen have fished them, as they dry up in the hot weather.

The fish are exported by train from Rājmahāl and Lālgolā to neighbouring districts; all methods of fishing are in vogue, including spearing by night by torch-light; as elsewhere, there is a common complaint of scarcity of fish.

Fishing boats and boats for ordinary use are built in English Bāzār and Khārbā thānā to a small extent, most of the boats that are to be seen coming from other districts. The local types are the *pānsī* carvel, built of *sāl* wood, from 20 to 60 feet long and the *pūt kōsā* clinker, built of *sāl* wood, 30 to 35 feet long.

Wild produce

Sula (*Arschynomena aspera*) is found in the *dūbās* and *bils* and is used for making toys, artificial flowers, floats and the ornamental work in a *tājia* or emblem carried at Mahomedan festivals. Large quantities of *khar* (reed grass) are also obtained from these lands and used in making *chappars* of boats and for ordinary thatching purposes *nal* or *narkat* reeds are also cut in considerable quantities and used for making the charcoal required by the bell-metal workers.

Imports and Exports

The principal exports are rice, pulses, oilseeds, raw silk and cocoons, brass and bell-metal utensils, fish, mangoes, jute and hides; while imports are cotton piece-goods, cotton yarn, kerosine oil, sugar, salt, metals, timber, corrugated iron, and various articles of European manufacture.

Trade centres.

The chief centres of trade are English Bāzār, Nawābganj, Old Mālā, Rohanpur, Bholāhāt and Tārtipur. Most of the trade is carried by boats and carts, all of the above centres being on the Mahānandā except the last, which is on a branch of the Ganges, and has risen to importance of recent years through the jute trade. A large amount of trade also goes through Rājmahāl in the Sonthal Parganās. The recent opening of the Katihār-Godāgāri line will, it is anticipated, lessen the importance of the English Bāzār-Rājmahāl route. Bullock carts are numerous, also pack bullocks and pack ponies. The bulk of the rice is exported to Calcutta; pulses and

dāl to Dinājpur and Calcutta; silk cloth up-country and to Calcutta; jute to Calcutta, whilst most of the imports are from Calcutta, except sugar from Bihar.

There are a number of fairs, of which the most important is *Fairs* the Ramkeli *mela*. It is held in the ruins of Gaur near the Sonā Masjid. It begins on the 1st Jyesth (mid June), lasting from four to five days. The fair is largely resorted to for purposes of business by people from all parts of the district, and particularly by the Polis, Deshis and Rajbānsis, who profess Chaitanya's doctrine. Cattle and all sorts of articles are on sale, the most noticeable of the latter being the Jangipur blankets from Murshidābād. The business done is calculated at sums amounting to Rs. 2,00,000 and the daily attendance at about 8,000. Minor *melas* are held in the Katadiara near Bholuka, and at Bāmangolā, Gājol and Sādullāpur. The weekly market at Bahā-Nawābganj near Old Mālda is attended by some 5 000 or 6,000 persons.

The maund of forty seers, *paseri* of 5 seers, and the seer, are commonly used in the district. The seer varies from 60 to 105 *tolas*. It is 60 at Nawābganj 72 at Rohanpur, 96 at Old Mālda, 105 at Tulsīhātā. These weights are mostly used for rice dealing, and the explanation of the variations may be that the difference from 60 represented, before improvement of communications, the cost of carriage to Nawābganj, the distributing centre for the *diāra* markets.

Weights
and mea-
sures

For silk cocoons the *kahān* of 16 *pan*s is used, and for raw silk the seer of 81 *tolas*.

Mangoes are sold retail by the *pan*, 80 to the *pan*.

For measuring land, the *hāt* (distance from elbow to finger tip) and the *katha* of 4 *hāts*, are used. 20 *kathas* make one *bigha*. The length of the *hāt* varies from 17 to 22 inches, the popular explanation of which is the difference in the length of the arm of the landlord or the surveyor.

For linear measurement the *ras* of 80 *hāts* is used.

CHAPTER IX.

MEANS OF COMMUNICATION

THE district is classed as partly riverine, and from the earliest time the rivers have been the most important means of communication on which the roads have converged. From November to July, however, nearly all parts of the district are accessible by bullock carts and there is a network of fair weather tracks which connect with the main roads. In the rains all the roads become to a great extent impassable for wheeled traffic and communications are mostly by boat or with pack bullocks and ponies.

A line of steam-boats runs daily except Mondays throughout the year from Lālgolā to Nimāsarai up the Mahānandā in connection with the Ganges steamer service and the Eastern Bengal Railway service. There is a steam ferry from Manikchak across the Ganges to Rājmahāl, which in the rains becomes a ferry service on three days of the week from Rājmahāl to English Bāzār *via* the Kālindī in connection with the East Indian Railway. There is also a steamer service on alternate days in the rains from Rājmahāl through the Paglā to Kānsāt and across the Ganges. The opening in 1909 of the Kātihār-Godagāri Railway has recently given railway communication within the district: there is a steam ferry from Lālgolā to Godagāri.

In Mahomedan times the main roads were that from Pandua *via* Old Mālda and Gaur to the Ganges, and that from Pandua across the Tāngan into Dinājpur district. The latter road has fallen into disuse, but parts of the former are incorporated in the English Bāzār-Rājmahāl road, near English Bāzār.

The earliest map of the district—Major Rennell's of date 1786—shows practically the same system of roads as that now existing.

The chief road is that from opposite Nawābganj through Sibganj, Gaur, English Bāzār, crossing the Mahānandā at Mālda and thence to Dinājpur. This is the old mail line. It connects with the *ghāra* from Kaliachak and Panchanandapur and with Gomāstapur from Kānsāt, being metalled from English Bāzār

to Gaur and for the first two miles of its *diāra* connections. Outside English Bāzār it connects with what was, till the opening of the railway, the most important road in the district, that from English Bāzār to Manikohak, called the Rājmahāl road : this latter road is metalled for three miles from English Bāzār. Opposite Old Mālda the road connects with a road running from that point to the Rājmahāl road and connecting with the latter near Amriti ; at Gājol it crosses a road which connects to the west across the Mahānandā with the Ratua-Chānchāl road at Samsi, and to the east across the Tāngan at Bāmango'ā to Patuahāt branching thence to the Dinājpur district and *via* Habibpur to Muchia Aihā on the Mahānandā. The road from Murshidābād to Darjeeling *via* Dinājpur enters the district near Jhelum and passes for a short distance through the district, connecting to the west with the marts of Nawabgānj, Gomāstapur and Rohanpur on the Mahānandā. From the Rājmahāl road at Amriti a road crosses the Kālindri to Ratua and thence by a cold weather track across the *tāl* to Samsi, Chānchāl, Khārbā to Churamon in Dinājpur in the east and to the Purnea border on the west. These roads are for the most part embanked and bridged and in many places except in the *bāriṇḍ* are planted with trees : fine avenues of mangoes and other trees are to be seen in places, particularly in the vicinity of old indigo factories. The remaining roads are for the most part mere cold weather tracks with few bridges. Generally speaking these tracks serve to give fairly good communication in the cold weather and the dry season in most parts of the district, except in the tract of country between the Tāngan and the Pūrṇabhābā, a part of the *bāriṇḍ* brought into cultivation comparatively recently.

The District Board maintains 20 miles of metalled road and 512 of unmetalled road, the average annual expenditure on communications for the five years 1908—1912 being Rs. 60,000.

Parts of the district are well provided with river communications : the Mahānandā, Kālindri, Tāngan and the Pūrṇabhābā are navigable throughout the year for boats up to 100 maunds. In the rains boats of any size can ply for a few months in the Bhāgirathi and the Paglā, whilst the old water-courses and the *tāl* streams of the north are also navigable for smaller boats and there is a connection between the Kālindri and the Ganges. Communications throughout the district are worst in the months of September, October and November, when the conditions are very bad. At this period

of the year smaller streams are useless for boats, and the roads are passable only for foot passengers and pack animals. The District Board maintains a large number of ferries on its roads and there are also a number of zamindari ferries. The larger ferries of Nawābganj, Old Mālda and Rājmahāl are the property of Government.

POSTAL
COMMUNI-
CATION

There are 197 miles of postal communication and 44 post offices in the district. The number of postal articles delivered in 1910-11 was 1,084,660; the value of the money orders issued 11 lakhs and paid 4 lakhs. The total deposits in the Savings Banks were Rs. 77,000.

There are three Telegraph Offices, at English Bāzār, Old Mālda and Chānchāl, besides the railway telegraph offices.

CHAPTER X.

LAND REVENUE AND GENERAL ADMINISTRATION.

THE early history of the fiscal administration of the district is that of the districts of Purnea, Dinājpur and Rājshāhī, out of outlying thānās of which it was formed, in 1813, the area thus formed being put under the charge of a Joint Magistrate and Deputy Collector. The thānās of Tulsihātā and Khārbā were added afterwards and there have since been slight changes in the extent of their jurisdiction. The powers of the Joint Magistrate and Deputy Collector were of an anomalous character, and hence originated the confusion which for a long time overhung the criminal, revenue, and civil jurisdiction of Mālda. He seems at first to have been to a certain extent under the control of the Collectors both of Purnea and Dinājpur, all communications from the Board of Revenue being transmitted to him through one or other of these treasuries. In 1832 a treasury was for the first time established at English Bāzār; and from that year the independence of the district is usually dated. After the East India Company assumed control of the administration the land revenue was collected under various farming and temporary settlements, until in 1793 the permanent settlement was made.

EARLY
ENGLISH
ADMINIS-
TRATION.

Since then the fluctuations of land revenue are slight. In 1873 the land revenue demand from permanently-settled estates was Rs. 3,15,444 payable by 560 estates; and in 1912 the demand was Rs. 4,00,658 payable by 618 estates. The difference in demand is mainly due partly to changes in jurisdiction and partly to the transfer of the collection of estates to the district owing to changes in the Ganges. It will be seen that the subdivision of estates has not proceeded at a great rate. The incidence of land revenue in permanently-settled estates is 5 annas 5 pies per acre, whilst in estates managed by Government as proprietors, the incidence of rent is Re. 1 as. 9 per acre. Taking this latter figure as the average rental for the district, the rental of superior landlords would be 18½ lakhs of rupees, on which the percentage of land revenue would be 21·7. The cess valuation gives the figures of Rs. 15,71,036 as the gross rental

LAND
REVENUE

and the percentage comes to 25.9. A general revaluation is, however, in progress.

SURVEYS

In 1848 a detailed survey of village boundaries was made, known as the revenue survey. It was based on a rough survey called the *thāk*bust survey, which immediately preceded it. In some places the *thāk*bust maps were made on compass and chain measurements, and in others merely by eye, the boundaries being demarcated by mounds of earth, and the distances between them measured by bamboo poles. The *diāra* survey of the bed of the Ganges was done in 1866 with a view to finding out new formations of land not assessed to revenue at the permanent settlement. It has not hitherto been connected with the revenue survey, with the result that there has been litigation, land assessed as excess lands at the *diāra* survey being claimed in some instances in the light of subsequent measurements to be re-formation *in situ* of permanently-settled land.

GOVERNMENT
ESTATES

Government owns the proprietary right in, or manages in lieu of the proprietors, 36 estates, with an area of 24,176 acres and a total rent of Rs. 37,292. These estates are periodically cadastrally surveyed and the rent of *rai*yats fixed. The settlements were formerly under Regulation VII of 1822 but recent settlements have been made under the Bengal Tenancy Act, where applicable. The most important of these estates are: (1) the Panchanandapur Khas Mahals acquired by Government partly by purchase at revenue sales of permanently-settled estates on default of proprietors in payment of land revenue, and partly by new accretions, of which the persons entitled have not taken settlement. Proprietors of the latter class are paid *mālikānā* amounting to not more than 10 per cent. of the gross rental. (2) The land formerly the property of the East India Company, on which its factory and private residences were built, and which now forms part of the town of English Bāzār and its vicinity. In addition to the above, Government is the proprietor of the valuable Ganges fisheries, acquired on default of payment of revenue. The Collector of the district is officially described as the Superintendent of the Gangapath Islampur Fisheries.

TENURES

The most common forms of tenure under the zamindars who hold proprietary rights are the *patni* and *jōt*. The *patni* is a tenure by which the *patnidār* binds himself to pay the landlord the share of the Government revenue payable by the land let under the tenure, over and above a fixed sum yearly to the superior landlord. It is generally heritable and transferable.

A sub-lease of a similar nature under a *patnidār* is known as a *darpatni*.

The chief feature of the *patni* tenure is, that when it is confined to one estate, or portion of an estate, and protected by registration, the *ramindar* can bring it to sale in the Collector's court, under Regulation VIII of 1818, for default of payment of revenue, such a sale voiding incumbrances. In other words, the landlord, without going to the civil court, can bring the tenure to sale for arrears of rent, twice a year, in a revenue court.

The term *jōt* as applied to a tenure implies that the tenure-holder does not himself farm the land, but merely collects rent from the *raiyats* who may, or may not, have occupancy rights. The *jōtdār* can only be sued, however, for rent by the landlord under the rent law: in other words, if he is recalcitrant, assuming that the rent is allowed to run to the full term of limitation (4 years), as is usual, the landlord cannot realize his rents within 7 years, 3 years being the ordinary time for obtaining decree and for execution. Numbers of these big *jōts*, or tenures, are held *makurrari*, i.e., at fixed rates, and are generally heritable, but as regards transferability there are disputes.

Some of them have grown out of the *ijāras*, or ordinary leases for a term of years, under which the indigo planters held land, and others from the settlement of waste lands with individuals.

Of revenue-free tenures the two most interesting are the *Sāshazāri* and *Bāishazāri* endowments. The first of these is a *madad-māsh* and the second a *wakf*, claimed to be granted by the local rulers with the sanction of the later Moghul Emperors, for the upkeep of the shrines of the saints of Pandua, and for the usual purposes of Mahomedan *wakfs*, i.e., education and charity. For many years there have been complaints by the local Mahomedan community, and by the *fakirs* resorting to shrines at the yearly festivals, of the diversion of the funds of the properties from their legitimate objects to the personal profits of the *malwālis* (managing proprietors) who are non-resident zamindars. Dr. Buchanan Hamilton mentions that in his time the estates were managed by Government which supervised the apportionment of the revenues.

Amongst smaller rent-free tenures recorded in the district may be mentioned *taraf Pirojpur* in *Sherahābād parganā* created by the Emperor Aurangzeb in favour of the saint Syed

Niāmat-ullā and known as a *bādshāhi altamghā*, or Imperial grant under a red and purple seal—a jaigir granted by Lord Cornwallis in Parganā Shikarpur for military services; a jaigir in the north-west of the district, said to have been granted by Mir Jafar to the *fakir* who discovered and gave up Sirāj-ud-daula after his flight from Plassey. These properties have all been long since alienated.

GENERAL
ADMINIS-
TRATION

The revenue administration of the district is in charge of the Collector, under the Commissioner of the Rājshāhī division; there are no subdivisions within the district. The Collector is assisted by a staff of three or four Deputy Collectors and one Sub-Deputy Collector.

Revenue

The total revenue of the district has risen from 6 lakhs of rupees in 1871-72 to 10 lakhs in 1900-01 and 11 lakhs in 1910-11. The main sources are Land Revenue, Excise, Stamps, Cess, Income-tax and Registration.

All sources are expanding except land revenue, which is fixed at 4½ lakhs, with slight variations due to changes in rental of the few estates managed directly by Government, including the Ganges fisheries.

Excise

Excise revenue is derived from duty and license fees for sale of country spirit, imported liquor, *tāri*, opium, hemp drugs chiefly *ganja*, *pachwāi*. Receipts have risen more or less steadily from Rs. 1,25,000 in 1880 to Rs. 2,26,000 in 1910.

The chief consumers of country spirit are Sonthals and low caste people. The spirit now sold is distilled from molasses and imported from the United Provinces, being distributed from the bonded warehouse at Old Mālda to the retail shops, of which there are 43. The average annual consumption is 10,000 L. P. gallons or 16 gallons per thousand of population. In 1910-11 the total revenue from country spirit was Rs. 88,000, or 1 anna 4 pies per head of population. The sale of imported liquor is nominal, its price being prohibitive.

Tāri, both fermented and unfermented, obtained from the palmyra and the date palm, is a favourite drink, there being 128 shops for its sale, producing from license fees Rs. 20,000 in 1910-11.

Pachwāi or rice beer is consumed by Sonthals at their religious festivals. Permits for its manufacture issued to headmen produced Rs. 4,000 in 1910-11.

There are 14 shops for the sale of opium of which the annual consumption is 46 maunds producing Rs. 53,500 in 1910-11 from duty and license fees. As compared with the

remaining districts of the division, the consumption is large. The drug is popular amongst elderly people for medicinal purposes and amongst the industrial population. Smoking of the preparation called *madak* is not uncommon.

Ganja and other hemp drugs are sold in 56 shops producing Rs. 66,700 revenue. *Ganja* is popular amongst the poorer classes.

Next to Excise, Stamps are the most important source of revenue. Receipts have risen from Rs. 79,000 in 1880 to Rs. 1,77,000 in 1910. Both judicial and non-judicial stamps show steady increases, the fluctuations as between them are due to the fact that in prosperous years litigation increases and in years of difficulty sales and mortgages are more numerous.

The Road and Public Works Cesses are levied at the maximum rate of one anna per rupee of rental and the current demand in 1910-11 was Rs. 89,973 payable by 949 revenue-paying estates, 176 revenue-free estates and 213 rent-free lands. The number of tenures in 1910-11 assessed to cesses was 9,481 and the number of recorded share-holders of estates and tenures was 1,637 and 2,011, respectively.

The yield from Income-tax is small but progressive in spite of the limit of taxable income having been raised to Rs. 1,000 per year. The receipts of 1910 were Rs. 31,663 as against Rs. 24,887 in 1890. Most of the assesses are money-lenders, grain dealers and merchants.

| Name. | Documents registered | Receipts | Expenditure |
|-------------------|----------------------|----------|-------------|
| | | Rs. | Rs. |
| English Bazar ... | 5,771 | 6,832 | 4,273 |
| Chanchal ... | 2,694 | 2,896 | 2,250 |
| Kalischak ... | 3,689 | 3,442 | 1,982 |
| Gomastapur ... | 3,127 | 2,642 | 2,698 |
| Nawabganj ... | 3,250 | 3,214 | 2,766 |
| Batna ... | 2,554 | 2,187 | 2,039 |
| Total ... | 21,085 | 20,712 | 15,998 |

There were six offices in 1910 for the registration of assurances against three in 1880. The inset shows the figures for 1910. In 1880 the number of documents registered was 6,170.

There is one office for the registration of Mahomedan marriages at English Bazar, but the use of

the Mahomedan Marriage Registration Act has made little headway in the district.

OTHER
SOURCES
OF
INCOME.

The receipts under this head are mainly derived from the ferries at Manikchak, Old Mālda and Nawābganj.

ADMINI-
STRATION
OF
JUSTICE

Civil cases are tried by the District Judge of Rājshāhi, two Munsifs at English Bāzār and one Munsif at Nawābganj. The bulk of the litigation consists of rent suits and suits on bonds.

CRIMINAL
JUSTICE

Criminal justice is administered by the Sessions Judge of Rājshāhi, who sits with assessors, the District Magistrate and the Deputy and Sub-Deputy Magistrates. The sanctioned staff is two Deputy Magistrates with first class powers, one Deputy Magistrate with second class powers, and one Sub-Deputy Magistrate with third class powers. There are benches of Honorary Magistrates at English Bāzār (four members), Nawābganj (five members) and Mathurāpur (one member). The English Bāzār and Mathurāpur benches have second class powers and Nawābganj third class. One member of the English Bāzār Bench and the Honorary Magistrate at Mathurāpur have single sitting powers.

Crime

Figures of crime are to be found in the statistical appendices. The most common forms of serious crime are burglary, theft, cattle-lifting and rioting over newly formed *chars*. Dacoity on the Purnea border is not uncommon as also highway robbery in the *bāriṇḍ* during the paddy-cutting season and the season of the fairs.

The district is a common resort of wandering gypsies, known as Nats or Kanjars, who are habitual thieves. There are no professional criminal classes in the district, though the Shershābād Mahomedans have the reputation of being turbulent and lawless. It was the prevalence of robbery and dacoity in the police-station of Sibganj and Kaliachak which first decided the creation of an independent criminal Magistracy at English Bāzār in 1813.

Police.

For police purposes the district is divided into 10 police-stations with four out-posts, viz., English Bāzār (Kotwālī) with beat house at Bholāhāt, Ratua with outposts at Manikchak, Kaliachak, Sibganj, Nawābganj, Gomastāpur, Old Mālda with outpost at Habibpur, Gājol with outpost at Bāmangolā, Khārbā and Tulsihātā.

The sanctioned regular police force paid from provincial funds and recruited under the Police Act consists of one Superintendent of Police, one Deputy Superintendent of Police, 2 Inspectors, 29 Sub-Inspectors, 32 head-constables and 265 constables. The proportion is one man to every

5·7 square miles of area or to every 3,042 of population.

The village police recruited under the Chaukidari Act consist of 1,819 dafadars and chaukidars, and its cost in 1910 was Rs. 1,21,812.

There is one third class district jail at English Bāzār; the average number of prisoners daily in 1910 was 156, the death rate being 7·21 per mille. There is accommodation for 159 male prisoners and 4 female prisoners; there are two cells. The figures of daily average of prisoners do not represent admissions for the district alone, prisoners being transferred from more crowded jails. The industries carried on are mustard seed pressing for oil and *sarki* making.

CHAPTER XI.

LOCAL SELF-GOVERNMENT.

THE machinery of local administration consists of Municipalities and the District Board, the former for the towns, and the latter for the district. These bodies are responsible for the provision of roads, bridges, ferries, dispensaries, sanitation and water-supply and superintend primary and middle education. There are no Local Boards nor Unions under the District Board.

The District Board was established in the year 1887 and consists of 13 members. It is a continuation of the old Ferry Fund Committee and Education Committee. The District Magistrate and Collector is an *ex-officio* member of the Board and its Chairman: there are 3 other *ex-officio* members and the remainder are nominated by the Local Government.

The average annual income of the Board for the 10 years 1901—1910 was Rs. 1,05,000, and expenditure Rs. 1,08,000, of which Rs. 34,830 was spent on communications, 24,200 on education and 14,000 on medical relief and water-supply.

The local sources of income were provincial rates Rs. 37,000 and pounds and ferries Rs. 34,000, the balance being contributed by Government.

In 1910-11 the income was Rs. 1,14,000 and expenditure Rs. 1,10,000. The income from local rates was Rs. 42,200, giving an incidence of 8 pies only per head of population, the lowest proportion for any district in Bengal, except Faridpur. The income from leasing pounds and ferries was Rs. 41,000, derived from 20 ferries and 89 pounds.

The expenditure on civil works was Rs. 71,600, of which Rs. 53,000 was spent on communications, and Rs. 4,800 on water-supply. The Board maintains 20 miles of metalled roads and 512 miles of unmetalled roads. The roads, with 13 inspection bungalows, are in charge of the District Engineer,

The expenditure on education was Rs. 23,000, of which half was spent on 279 lower primary schools and the remainder on middle schools. Scholarships are given to the Bihar School of Engineering and the Veterinary College of Belgachia.

On medical relief the amount expended was Rs. 7,406 ; the percentage of income devoted to dispensaries was 8·4. The Board has spent during the 10 years 1901—1910, an average of Rs. 6,000 a year on water-supply ; under the system at present in vogue it contributes one-third of the cost of approved projects for wells or tanks, besides directing construction.

There are three Municipalities, viz., English Bāzār, Old Mālda and Nawābganj. The number of rate-payers is 6,505, out of a total population of 61,334, or 10 per cent. The chief taxation is by a rate on persons according to their circumstances and property and a tax on vehicles. There is a latrine-tax in English Bāzār and parts of Nawābganj on the value of holdings. The incidence of taxation is Re. 1-1-5 in English Bāzār, Re. 1-2-1 in Old Mālda and annas 6-6 in Nawābganj. The Municipalities elect their own Chairman and Vice-Chairman.

The English Bāzār Municipality, constituted in 1869, consists of 18 members of whom 3 are *ex-officio* and 3 are nominated by Government, the remainder being elected. There are four wards : the number of rate-payers is 2,125 or 15 per cent. of the population. The average annual income and expenditure, including loans for the years 1901—1910, was Rs. 21,348. In 1910-11 the figures were, income Rs. 18,706, expenditure Rs. 16,393. The tax on persons realised Rs. 7,527 and latrine tax Rs. 5,191. Conservancy and drainage, medical relief and public works, absorbed 52 per cent., 9·8 per cent., and 14·5 per cent., respectively, of the total income.

English
Bāzār

The town has drainage system recently installed, drains in the inhabited portions being mostly of masonry. It would appear that to make the system really efficient power is necessary, the natural fall being too small to keep the drains flushed. Water-supply is obtained from the river Mahānandā, wells and tanks, and it is fairly good. The cause of the outbreaks of malarial fever which occur every few years in the town is obscure : it may be observed, however, that large areas within the Municipality are covered with close planted mango gardens, the undergrowth of which is not systematically kept down. Most of the roads are metalled.

Old Mālda Municipality, constituted in 1869, consists of 12 members of whom 2 are *ex-officio*, 2 nominated by Government, and the rest elected. There are three wards. The average income and expenditure for the 10 years 1901—1910 was Rs. 3,833 and the figures for 1910-11 were Rs. 4,665 and Rs. 3,702, respectively. The expenditure on conservancy and drainage was 33 per cent.,

Old
Mālda

on medical 1·3 per cent., and public works 13·3 per cent., of the income.

The town, though on comparatively high land, is very unhealthy, there being no drainage system. The water-supply is obtained from the Mahānandā and from wells, that from the latter source being of indifferent quality. The urban area, which is small, is confined to a few narrow streets, which are metalled.

Nawāb-
ganj

Nawābganj Municipality, constituted in 1903, consists of 12 members, all nominated. There are four wards. The average annual income and expenditure for the five years to 1910 were Rs. 8,260 and Rs. 7,273, respectively. For 1909-10 the income was Rs. 10,454 including newly levied latrine-tax Rs. 936. The expenditure on conservancy was 23 per cent. and public works 27 per cent., of the income. This Municipality has made little headway since its inception and is still in the stage of training its members in municipal administration, and overcoming opposition to municipal taxation. The chief requirements of the town are metalled roads and efficient drainage. Drinking water is obtained from the river Mahānandā and from wells, and is on the whole good, though not sufficient during the months of April and May.

CHAPTER XII.

EDUCATION.

HAMILTON speaks of the education available in the district when he visited it as being confined to *pāthsālas* and *muktabas* and *tōls*. In the *pāthsālas* were taught Bengali, reading and writing, and arithmetic. In the *muktabas* and *tōls* Persian and Sanskrit, respectively. EDUCATION.

In 1856-57 there were two Government aided vernacular schools with 117 scholars, and in 1860 one of these schools was converted into a middle English school, the total number of scholars being 169. In 1870 there were four English schools and 14 vernacular schools either maintained or aided by Government, with 986 pupils, the number of indigenous schools uninspected and unaided being 107. In 1872 when Sir George Campbell's scheme for education was introduced, 179 schools were brought under Government supervision with 4,207 pupils. In 1880 the number had increased to 393 schools with 6,535 pupils, the grant-in-aid for primary education being Rs. 4,000 per year.

In 1887 the District Board created under the Bengal Local Self-Government Act took over the local direction of primary education superseding the old District Committee of Public Instruction.

In 1890 the number of schools in the district, aided and unaided, had risen to 350 with 12,148 pupils or 20 per cent. of the estimated school-going male population, Rs. 8,000 being spent on primary education.

In 1907 the number of primary schools was 450 with 12,197 pupils and in 1910 the corresponding figures were 508 and 19,257, the expenditure of the Board being Rs. 15,517. The percentage of male pupils to those of school-going age was 22·7.

The main obstacles to the spread of elementary education are the unhealthiness of the *barind* country, in which it is next to impossible to get outside teachers for primary schools to live on the pay given, whilst local teachers are not available; the objection of the reformed Mahomedan sects, especially the *Shershāhādīs*, to any education, and in particular secular education; the large number of inhabitants speaking Sonthali and

Hindi, who hitherto have not found it necessary to learn Bengali, the language of the schools. The opposition of Mahomedans to secular teaching is now breaking down, but the other difficulties are likely to remain until economic conditions arise which make it necessary for the children of the lower castes and classes to have some education, however slight, to enable them to hold their own. The number of persons returned at the census of 1901 as able to read and write was 33,093 and as able to read and write English 1,476; the corresponding figures of the 1911 census being 45,904 and 2,793.

SECONDARY
EDUCATION

There are no colleges in the district, and only three high schools, the zilla school at English Bazar maintained by Government, the Chanchal high school and the Nawabganj high school.

The high school at Old Malda has become a middle English school owing to the changes in the University requirements, and that at Nawabganj is not in a flourishing condition. The number of pupils in the high schools is 600, mostly drawn from the foreign elements in the town and from the wealthier trading and farming classes.

The number of graduate inhabitants of the district is infinitesimal, and secondary education makes slow progress, as English education is connected in the popular mind with disinclination to do manual work or follow the paternal occupation, and it is not unknown for fathers to refuse to allow their sons to take up scholarships which they may have won in middle English schools.

Middle
English
schools

There are four middle English schools, at Nawabganj, Sibganj, Old Malda and Mathurapur, all aided; the remaining schools are middle vernacular, upper primary and lower primary; in practice, it is found that the bulk of the pupils, even in the middle vernacular and upper primary schools, are in the lower classes of the lower primary standards, and the tendency is for the decline of middle vernacular schools. The figures quoted show that there has been a considerable increase in the number of those receiving lower primary instruction, though for the reasons stated the progress has been slow compared with that of the districts of Lower Bengal.

Special
schools.

There is one *guru*-training school at English Bazar and one weaving school.

National
schools.

At the beginning of the agitation against the Partition of Bengal a National school reading up to the standard of the high English school was started in English Bazar and various

subsidiary village schools were also started. The special feature of these schools was the stress laid on technical education as opposed to the literary curriculum of Government schools. These institutions have not succeeded in establishing themselves on a sound footing, partly because the higher class people, from which most of the boys come, do not take kindly to industrial occupation involving manual labour.

Some 2,275 girls or 7·9 per cent. of those of school-going age are receiving primary education, mostly in the lower primary schools with boys. The Barlow girls' school of English Bāzār reads up to the upper primary standard and there are a few girls in the higher classes.

FEMALE
EDUCA-
TION

CHAPTER XIII.

GAZETTEER OF DISTRICT.

Amaniganj Hat.—An important silk mart on the Bhāgira-thi. There is no resident population but it is a centre for the Jalālpur duars of the silk trade in cocoons and raw silk, to which resort buyers from Rājshāhī and Murshidābād districts. The turnover on a single day in the busy season occasionally amounts to a lakh of rupees and the prices made here control those of the whole district in these products.

Bholahat.—A large centre of silk reeling on the right bank of the Mahānanda six miles below English Bāzār. Up till recent times a filature factory was working here which employed several hundreds of hands. It is a calling station of the Lālgolā steamer service and is a considerable centre of general trade for the surrounding villages. In the main street of the village there is a fine specimen, though now somewhat defaced, of Hindu stone carving, evidently a relic of Gaur.

English Bazar or Engrozabad.—Headquarters town of Mālda district, on the right bank of the Mahānandā, is 25° 0' N. and 88° 9' E. Population (1911) 14,322. Being an open elevated site on the river bank in a mulberry growing country, it was chosen at an early date as the site of one of the Company's silk factories. The French and Dutch had also settlements here and the residence of the Civil Surgeon was formerly a Dutch convent.

The East India Company's factory was of considerable importance during the last quarter of the 17th century, and its 'diaries and consultation' from 1685 to 1693 (with breaks) are still preserved in the India Office under the title of 'Maulda and Englesavade'. In 1770 Mr. Henselman built the commercial residency and factory of the Company at English Bāzār and the modern town grew up round it, materials being largely taken from Gaur. To this day the portions of the town near the factory are known by names such as Lakrikhana (wood yard), Murghikhana (fowl yard) and similar names showing the original use to which the land was put. The factory was regularly fortified with bastions at the angles of the surrounding wall. It is now used as the court house and all the public

offices at headquarters are within its walls. Other public buildings of the town are the jail and the high school. Many of the houses in the town are faced with carved stones from the ruins of Gaur. There is an interesting collection of these stones in the court-house and also in the compound of the Collector's house.

The railway station is on the opposite side of the river, and the town is a calling station for the Lālgolā steamer service. Its trade in silk, jute, mangoes and manufactured goods is considerable, and it has a considerable population of weavers.

It was constituted a Municipality in 1869 with 18 Commissioners, of whom two-thirds are elected.

There is a small embankment protecting the town from the inundations of the Mahānandā. A feature of the town is the extensive mango gardens which cut it off from the agricultural country to the west.

Gaur.—The city of Gaur, a deserted capital of Bengal, is situated on an old channel of the Ganges in 24° 52' N., and 88° 10' E., 10 miles south-west of English Bāzār, from which it is reached by a macadamised road. Its dimensions as defined by the embankments which still exist are about 7½ miles in length north and south, and from 1 to 2 miles in breadth from east to west. It has been mentioned that at the time of the Mahomedan invasion another name of the city was Lakhnauti or Lakshmanavatlī. Dr. Buchanan Hamilton says in his MSS. that in his time the Fort and palace of Lakshman were to be seen on what is now merely elevated ground in the vicinity of English Bāzār, and it may be that the name of Lakhnauti was applied originally to describe the extension of the present city northwards round the king's residence. Hamilton appears to include this portion within the city limits, as he speaks of the area covered by Gaur as 20 square miles. The remains of embankments north and north-east of the city proper still exist, and they probably covered the suburbs in that direction and were defensive out-works. The line of swamps to the east and north-east of the city site show that at one time the Ganges flowed on the east face of the city, which was thus situated between the Bhāgirathī and the Ganges. On the eastern side a double line of earth embankments of enormous thickness still exists, and it is supposed that these embankments protected the city from being washed away when, in the sixteenth century, the Ganges commenced to recede from what is now the Mahānandā. At the present time the Ganges main stream is 10 miles west of the city, which is clearly defined by the above-mentioned

embankments on the east and by an irregular line of embankments on the north, which crosses the English Bāzār-Nawābganj road at the fifth mile from English Bāzār and continues down to the BhāgIrathī. This river with the Paglā forms the western boundary down to Mahādipur, from which place the southern ramparts extend almost continuously to the eastern, crossing the Nawābganj road at the Kotwali gate in the fourteenth mile from English Bāzār. South from Mahādipur runs the Firōzpur suburb down to Kānsāt, whilst on the north-west of the city is the Sādullāpur suburb.

Almost the whole of the site is now cultivated land under field and orchard crops, with scattered villages. Some jungle remains, mostly along and close to the southern embankment. Of the fort within the city two gates, the Dākhl Darwāzā, and the Lukāchuri, still exist with a part of the ramparts. Within the fort precincts are some remains of the palace wall and various buildings described below. This wall, which is made of brick, is known from its height as the Bāisgazi or 22 yards, the width at the top is 8 feet 6 inches. The clearing of the jungle and cultivation of the ground have led to the discovery of considerable quantities of gold and silver coins, but all of these are of Mahomedan times, and beyond a few isolated carvings there is little to indicate the pre-Mahomedan history of the city. It may indeed be said that the only indication of its Hindu origin is to be found in the tanks with their longer sides running north and south, which are scattered throughout the city and its neighbourhood. Of these the most important is the great Sāgardighi which measures 1,600 by 800 yards and is one of the largest pieces of ornamental water in Bengal. It was originally the site of the brick-fields of Gaur. On its banks are to be seen the remains of the tomb of the saint Akhi Serāj-ad-din, described as the first Hindustani recognised as a saint by Nizamuddin Aulia of Delhi. The gateway was built by Hosain Shāh and the inscription on it refers to a building by Nasrat Shāh. The *Panya* of the saint Nur Kutb Alam is taken on the Id Day, the day of the *fatiha* (prayers for the dead) of Akhi Serajuddin, from Pandua to the tomb as a mark of respect. On both Id and Bakr-Id days there are *melas*. Close by the tomb is the Jhanjhaniya mosque which bears an inscription that it was erected in the reign of Mahmud Shāh, son of Husain Shāh. At Sādullāpur itself is the burning ghat on the BhāgIrathī of the Hindus and the Durbāsini shrine. It is still a place of great resort on festival days for bathing in the Ganges and is also used largely as a burning ghat. Tradition has it

that at the time of the Mahomedan rule it was the only burning ghat allowed to the Hindus in Gaur.

Of the Mahomedan buildings in Gaur the oldest dates from the fifteenth century. The chief destructive agency apart from the secondary jungle, which up till recent years covered the greater part of the old city, would seem to have been earthquakes and the quarrying of the ruins to provide the building material of Murshidābād, Mālda and English Bāzār. Mr. Reuben Barrow, who visited these ruins in 1787, says in his journal: "Gaur seems rather to have been destroyed by the removal of the materials for other purposes, than by time. These tombs were not long ago in perfect order and were held in a manner sacred, till they were torn to pieces for the sake of stone; indeed such of the gates as happened to have no stone in them are almost perfect, but wherever a piece of stone was happened to be placed, the most elegant buildings have been destroyed to get it out, so that there is now scarcely a piece left except a part in the round tower which happens to have been preserved by the peculiar construction of the building." The first systematic exploration of the site was made by Mr. Creighton in 1801.

In 1810 Dr. Buchanan Hamilton visited the ruins and wrote a description of them. A brief account is given below of the remains still existing. These lie for the most part on both sides of, and close to, the English Bāzār-Nawābganj road from the 8th to the 14th mile. The buildings marked with an asterisk in the description which follows have been restored and protected under the Preservation of Ancient Monuments Act of 1904 A. D. They are seven in number.

The Baradarwāzi* or great Golden Mosque (*Sona Masjid*) of Ramkel, the largest building now standing in Gaur, is rectangular in shape and built of brick faced with stone. It measures 168 feet from north to south, by 75 feet east to west. The height to the cornice is 20 feet. It stands on the western side of a raised quadrangle 200 feet square which was itself formerly enclosed. The front of the building with its eleven arched openings each 5' 11" wide faces across the enclosure the partially restored entrance gateway into the quadrangle. There are other openings on the north and south fronts, the west wall being dead externally. The building itself unlike most Mahomedan mosques was completely roofed over by 44 small domes, supported internally on stone pillars and forming a verandah corridor or gallery in the front of the building, and three long aisles constituting the mosque proper. At present only the north, east and south walls are intact with the domes

of the corridor: the western wall with its arches has largely gone and the three inner aisles are now open ground. The inscription stone on the front has disappeared but it is known that the building was erected by Nasrat Shāh about 1526. Near the mosque is the Sanātan tank and the village of Ramkel where the great *bairagi mela* is held annually. Until its restoration the ruined mosque used to be a shelter and camping ground for visitors to the *mela*.

About a mile south of the Baradarwāzi is the Firoz *Minār*,* a brick tower 84 feet high. Its shape is at first that of a polygon of twelve sides which becomes a circle for the last one-third of its height. Most of the stone-work at the base has been removed, but the stone lintel of the door has now been replaced. The diameter of the base is 30 feet. Inside is a spiral staircase with 73 steps giving access to the top, which is shown in Creighton's drawing covered by a dome-like structure which has been restored recently. The inscription is missing. By one account it is said to have been built by the Abyssinian Sultan Firoz Shāh about 1487, though for what purpose is not known. By another account it is ascribed to Ala-ad-din Husain Shāh who erected it to commemorate his victories in Assam. Locally it is known as the *Pir-Asa-Minār*, or *Chirāgdani*. Small *chirāgs* (native lamps) are placed as offerings to the *Pir* on the top of the *Minār*. There are a number of initials carved in the Roman character near the top of the building, and Mr. Samuells, a former Collector of the district, has recorded the note: "Hedges, the Governor of the Company, in 1683, visited English Bāzār and Gaur and records the visit in his diary. He came up the Mahānandā from Lālgolā and anchored for the night at Bahaghāta at Rohanpur. He visited Gaur with two English ladies. Fanny Parkes also visited Gaur. She was shown over by Mr. Chambers and she saw written in the *Minār* the names of Harwood 1771, S. Grey 1772, Creighton and others. She also found the initials 'M. V., 1683' and Mr. Beveridge supposes this was one of the ladies of Hedges' party. Mr. Creighton visited the tower several times and engraved his name with a knife with the dates '1786, 1788, 1790, 1791'."

Close to the *Minār* is the Dākhil Darwāzā,* or the main gate of the fort. It is built of brick, and dates from the time of Husain Shāh (1510 A. D.). Piercing the massive earthen ramparts at right angles and measuring 112 feet in length, the appearance from the interior is that of a lofty tunnel. On either side of the main passage are the guard rooms. The

brick-work of both ends is externally highly ornamented with designs in embossed brick. The ramparts of earth on both sides have their base as broad as the length of the structure and slope steeply upwards to a height almost equal to that of its arched roof.

The Kadam Rasul,* or The Footstep of the Prophet, is a square building within the fort enclosure, under the dome of which and in the main chamber is a stone on which is kept a foot-print in stone of the Prophet. The inscription over the doorway of the mosque ascribes its erection to Sultan Nasrat Shāh in 1530 A. D. The foot-print was removed from Pandua from the *Chillakhana* or prayer room of the saint Shāh Jalāl-addin Tabrizi by Sultan Husain Shāh, and is now kept in the custody of a local resident, the *khadim*. There is an inscription over the southern gate of the enclosure wall of this mosque relating to the building of another mosque in the reign of Sultan Yusuf Shāh, son of Sultan Barbak Shāh, in the year 1540 A. D. Immediately adjacent to the Kadam Rasul is a building in brick and cement, shaped like an ordinary native hut, and containing the tomb of Fatihyar Khan, the son of Dilāwar Khan, Aurangzeb's general. Local tradition has it that the Emperor suspected the saint Shāh Niūmat-ullā Wālī of advising the Sultan Suja to rebel, and ordered Dilāwar Khan to cut off the saint's head. The saint's innocence was vindicated by the sudden and mysterious death of Fatihyar Khān.

Within the fort ramparts and close to them in the vicinity of the Kadam Rasul are to be seen : (1) the Lukāchuri or the east gate of the fort, a two-storied gate-way with guard rooms on each side and a place for drummers over them. It is built of brick and stone and is the only building which shows traces of plaster. It is comparatively recent, being built after the decay of the city as a part of the restoration sketched by Shāh Suja. (2) The Chikha mosque or Chamkan, locally known as Chor-khana or jail. The building resembles the Eklākhi at Pandua, being single domed and 71½ feet square with an internal chamber 42 feet square. Cunningham describes it as the burial place of Mahmud, son of Jalaluddin. Close by is another building known as the Gumti mosque. Mention has already been made of the remains of the palace or Bāisgazi wall. Near this is a plot of ground with a tank, known as Khazanchi (treasury) and Taksaldighi (Mint tank) respectively.

Some hundreds of yards in a north-easterly direction from the Khazanchi is a place known as the Bangla kot, the

graveyard of the kings of Gaur. Near by were, till their despoilment in the middle of last century, the graves of Husain Shāh and his wife and a square enclosure of which the walls were of coloured bricks. There is still in existence a document of a grant by Nawab Muazam Khan at the orders of the Emperor Aurangzeb, of 50 bighas of land for the purpose of lighting the tombs of the kings of Gaur. The property has long been sold and the income diverted.

East of the Lukāchuri and close to the Nawābganj road is a dilapidated mosque known as the Chamkutti mosque of which Mr. Creighton has left a sketch. South of it and some way down the Nawābganj road is the Tāntipārā* or Weavers' mosque. It is believed to have been erected about 1510 by Umar Kazi, whose grave with that of his brother is in front of the building. Only the outer walls of brick remain, they are remarkable for the panel designs in embossed brick with which they are ornamented. All stone work has been removed from the walls. The building measured 91 feet by 44 feet externally and 78 feet by 31 feet internally, being divided by stone pillars into two aisles. The roof was of 10 domes but it came down completely in an earthquake in 1885. The front had five arched openings and the end walls two arched openings each, the corners of the building being finished off in the shape of octagonal towers.

A short distance below this mosque and on the other side of the road is the Lōtan* mosque, built according to tradition by a courtesan. It is in the Pathan style, the main chamber surmounted by a single dome measures 34 feet square and there is a corridor in front 11 feet wide and surmounted by three domes. The walls are from 8 to 11 feet thick. The building is remarkable for the free use of brilliantly coloured encaustic tiles, both internally and externally and on the pavement of the courtyard. Sufficient remain to give a good idea of the original ornamentation, though hundreds of these tiles have been taken away to ornament modern buildings in the district. At the time of the recent restoration of the building it was found that the expense of reproducing them was prohibitive.

Below the mosque the road crosses an old arched masonry bridge and then pierces the southern ramparts of the city at the Kotwālī gate, a fortified arched gateway in brick 30 feet high and 17 feet wide. Near the gateway is a broken wall, the remains of what is called the Pithwālī mosque. On the Nawābganj side of the gate between the Balīā dighī and the Kharia dighī are remains of the Rājibī mosque.

A mile south of the Kotwālī gate and on the east side of the road lies the small Golden mosque,* also known as the Jani-i-masjid and the Khajehi masjid. This last name is connected with the tradition that it was built by a eunuch. It is in the Pathan style of brick, faced with stone, and dates from the beginning of the sixteenth century. Rectangular in shape, its external measurements are 82 feet by 52 feet and internal 70 feet by 41 feet. There were 5 arched doorways and the building was divided into three longitudinal aisles, the roofing of the three inner bays supported on arches being four sided vaulting whilst that of the outer bays was the ordinary small domes. A good deal of the roofing and part of the west wall is now gone.

Between the Kotwālī gate and Mahādīpur are the remains of the Gunmani mosque which is still used by the local Mahomedans for prayer on the Id and Bakr-id days. Its dimensions are 158 feet by 59 feet and it is built of brick faced with stone. There were 24 small domes of which 9 have fallen and a larger vault over the nave. Nothing is known as to the date of this building and no inscription remains. Half a mile north is the Begmahomed mosque, a small mosque now in ruins, with a terrace of coloured tiles. Opposite it are tombs.

Between Mahādīpur and Fīrōzpur there is a piece of ground called the *Darashari* or lecture hall. The mosque, which is now completely destroyed, measured 98 feet by 57 feet. The roofing was similar to that of the Baradarwāzi with 28 domes supported on internal arches, the longer aisles or cloisters from north to south, of which there were four, each carrying 7 domes. The inscription on a stone found in the rubbish of this building ascribes its erection towards the end of the fifteenth century to Yusuf Shāh, son of Bārbak Shāh.

In Fīrōzpur is the Dhanchak mosque ascribed to Dhanpat Saudagar. He and his brother Chand Saudagar were the bankers of Gaur in the sixteenth century and lived near the small Sagardighi east of the Lotan masjid.

A place of pilgrimage in Fīrōzpur is the tomb of the saint Syed Shāh Niamatulla and the small mosque near it. The saint was a native of Karnal and wandered to Rājmahāl where he was much honoured by Sultan Shāh Sujā. He finally settled and died in Fīrōzpur. There is an endowment for the up-keep of his tomb.

Of the numerous tanks within the city boundaries mention may be made of the Piyāsbārī and the Kamhīrpīr. They lie on the eastern side of the Nawabganj road. Piyāsbārī or "abode of thirst" gets its name from the tradition that the

water of this tank was given to criminals condemned to death, the water being said to have been deadly to life. Near the tank is a plot of land known as the Flower Garden.

The Kunhirpir takes its name from the crocodiles living in it. The common people believe that one of them embodies a saint and the others are his retinue. Offerings are made to the saint of fowls and meat. The *khadim* (priest) of the Kadam Rasul calls out "Come Baba Shah Khizr, take the offering" and as a rule the crocodile will come to the bank, mount it and take away the meat to eat. If the crocodile does not come, it is on account of some grievous fault in the giver of the offering.

Mahadipur.—A large village on the banks of the Paglā and formerly the south-western portion of Gaur. Reference may be made to the article on Gaur for an account of its antiquities. It is a considerable centre for the trade of the *diāra* tracts.

Malda or Old Malda.—Town in Mālā district situated on the left bank of the Mahānandā at its confluence with the Kālindī in 25° 2' N., and 81° 8' E. Population (1911) 3,750. The town is admirably situated for river traffic and probably rose to prosperity as the port of Pandua. During the eighteenth century it was a centre of cotton and silk manufactures and the French and Dutch had factories there as well as the English. The English factory was, however, transferred to English Bāzār in 1770 and the town began to lose its prosperity with the rise of English Bāzār. It has tended to decline throughout the nineteenth century. It is, however, still a considerable distributing centre of manufactured goods for the *bāzind* and does a large export trade in rice and jute. There is a railway station of the Katihār-Godagāri line with a branch to the river side and it is a point of call of the Lālgolā steamer service up the Mahānandā. The site of the large market of Baliā-Nawābganj, which is held weekly, is just outside municipal limits. The town was constituted a Municipality in 1869 and has a board of 12 Commissioners, of whom two-thirds are elected. There is also a Bench of Honorary Magistrates. The town proper is situated on a ridge and, land above flood level being limited, the houses mostly brick-built, though showing many traces of removal of building stone from Gaur and Pandua, are huddled together in very narrow streets only wide enough for a bullock cart to get through. This and the resulting unhealthiness has tended to make the place largely merely a business centre instead of a residential centre. The antiquities of the town are: (1) The

Jama Masjid, a building of carved brick and stone 72' by 27'. It has two big domes and one big arched vault, with minarets at the corners. It contains two side chambers 16' by 16' and a central chamber 22' by 16'. The pillars at the entrance gate are of handsomely carved stone. The inscription shows that it was built by one Musum Saudagar in 1566 A.D. (2) The shrine of Shāh Gada containing the tomb of Shāh Gada and others, as well as that of a parrot which learned to recite prayers from the Koran. Opposite the shrine is the grave of *dudh* (milk) *pir* at which the faithful offer milk to the *pir* by pouring it into a small hole close to the grave.

Two other mosques may be mentioned, the Phuti masjid (cracked mosque) built in 1495 and now given over to jungle; and the Nawāb's mosque, now dilapidated, ascribed to the piety of a Nawāb of Murshidābād.

Across the river and opposite the town of Mālda is the tower of Nimāsaraī of 18 feet diameter and height 55 feet. It is studded with projecting stones and is a landmark of the neighbourhood. It is suggested that it was built for a hunting tower and also used as a watch or signal tower.

Nawabganj (also called Bāraghariā Nawābganj).—A town in Mālda district situated on the Mahānandā a little above its junction with the Ganges, in 24° 36' N and 88° 17' E. Population (1911) 23,322. It is a calling station of the Lālgolā steamer service and a great centre of the rice traffic from Dinājpur and Rājshāhī to the *diāra* tracts. The rice comes in carts by the Jhelum road. The town itself is noted locally for its bell-metal and brass ware.

It was constituted a Municipality in 1903 and has a Board of 12 nominated Commissioners. There is a Munsif here and a Bench of Honorary Magistrates. Baragharia is the name of the village opposite Nawābganj across the river. Till recent times the European filature there was working and employed a considerable amount of labour.

There is a small embankment on the river front at Nawābganj to prevent flooding from the Mahānandā. The place has a large agricultural population, being on late alluvium on the edge of unhealthy *bāriṇḍ* tracts, the cultivators of which prefer to live in the town.

Pandua or Parash.—An old capital of Bengali in the *bāriṇḍ* or *Bāreṇḍrabhūm* situated in 25° 8' N., and 88° 10' E., at a distance of 6 miles north-east from Old Mālda, on either side of the main road from Old Mālda to Dinājpur. The railway station and the steamer ghat from which it is most

*easily reached are both in Old Mālda though called Nīmā-sarai and the road from that place is good except in the rains. Up till recent times the site of Pandua away from the road was covered with heavy jungle, in particular a species of bamboo called *beur bans*, exceptionally thorny and growing in clumps as impenetrable as a cane brake. It has been suggested that this variety was planted by the rulers of the city to help in its defence. Most of the jungle has now been cleared by Sonthals though the population of the place is still small and confined to a few villages off the main road.*

The comparative obscurity of Pandua has led to its antiquities being attributed to Gaur, and where a mention of the place is found in history, it has often been confused with the place of the same name in the Hooghly district.

*The port of the city in its prosperity was Old Mālda. There was also a fortified post at Raikhandighi some 10 miles further up the Mahānandā which guarded the bridge over the Mahānandā at Pirganj and the military road to the west. The suburbs of the city extended to both of these places, though very few remains have been discovered which suggests that all the buildings of the outskirts of the town were merely the common mud houses of the *bārind*. A curious local tradition is that a place in the vicinity of the Adinah mosque used to be dug for lead.*

Dr. Buchanan Hamilton thus describes Pandua :—" A road paved with brick from 12 to 15 feet wide and not very straight seems to have passed through the entire length of the town, which stretches nearly north and south and is about 6 miles in length. From the heaps of bricks on both sides it would appear to have been a regular street lined with brick houses, of which the foundations and the tanks can still be traced in many places. Almost all the surviving monuments are on the border of this road ; near the middle is a bridge of three arches, partly constructed of stones, which has been thrown over a rivulet. It is rudely built and of no great size, and as is the case with all other monuments in Pandua, the materials have manifestly come from the Hindu temples as they still show sculptured figures, often inverted, of men and animals. At the northern end of the street are evident traces of a rampart, and the passage through it is called Garhduar (gate of the fort). At the south are many foundations which have probably belonged to a gate."

The remains which now exist may be divided into those of Pandua and Adinah, the distance between the two places being about two miles. The principal buildings are all, with few

exceptions, by the side of the Dinājpur road. Those at Pandua consist of *asthanas* or *dargas* (shrines) of the Bāishakari and Sashakari endowments, the Kutabshahi mosque, and the Eklakhi Mausoleum, the last two of which have been protected and restored under the Preservation of Monuments Act, whilst the buildings of the shrines are maintained out of their endowments. At Adinah are the Adinah mosque protected and partially restored under the Act, and at a distance of a mile to the east, the Sataishghar and other ruined buildings. A brief account is given of these buildings.

Coming from the direction of Mālda a brick archway called the *Salāmi Darwāza* or entrance gate is seen on the right hand side of the road, the path from which leads to the *Bari Dargah* (shrine) of the saint Makhdum Shāh Jalāl Tabrizi. As the name implies, the saint was a native of Tabriz: he settled in Bengal and acquired property, which he bequeathed for religious purposes. Authorities differ as to the date of his death, which occurred according to one account in 1337, and to another in 1244 A.D. The place of his death is also uncertain: one account places it in the Maldives. Tradition accounts for the various tombs of the saint by the story that Hāji Ibrahim, whose incarnation he was, appeared at the various places where the saint had made his devotions and reported his death, which forthwith occurred in those places. Near the archway at which the saint used to sit for his devotions, is a *nim* tree and local tradition has it that the tree sprang from a piece of *nim* wood used by the saint for a tooth brush. To cut the tree is death and though its branches appear to be low, an elephant with howdah can pass underneath them without difficulty. The chief buildings of the shrine, situated about a quarter of a mile from the arch, are on three sides of a courtyard, on to which give a mosque, a room in which the saint is said to have performed his devotions, and a refectory. The prayer room was, however, erected by the saint Shāh Niāmat-Ullā-Wālī of Fīrōzpur in 1664 A.D., and no trace remains of the original shrine erected by Sultan Mubarak. Another building now in ruins in the shrine which may be mentioned is the *Lakhan Senī dālan*: there is unfortunately nothing to show how the building came by this name. The inscription on the west wall records that in the time of Haibatulla matwali, the building was shaken and Ram Ram, son of Baikal Raj, was commissioned to repair it. The endowment is called Baishāsāri because it consisted of 22,000 bighas of land. The present *matwalis* claim to hold it as a *wakf*. Strangers are fed, and it is a place

(1) Bai-
shāsāri
shrine,
Pandua.

of resort of *fakirs* from every part of India, particularly in the months of Rajab and Shaban when *melas* are held and the *fatihā* (prayers for the dead) of the saint recited. One of the treasures of the darga is a Sanskrit book known as the *Puthi Mubarak* : it is a history of the life of the saint.

(2) Sas
hāzārī
shrine.

Near the Baishāzārī shrine but on the other side of the road are the buildings of the Sashāzārī or 6,000 *bigha* endowment a *madadmash*, which has for one of its objects the upkeep of the *Chhoti Darga* or shrine of the saints, father and son, Ala-ul-Huq and Hazrat Nur Kutb Alam, who lived at Pandua, and died in 1384 and 1415 A.D., respectively. Among the buildings of the shrine on the banks of a tank are the tombs of both the saints and some of their descendants and others : the house of prayer of Nur Kutb Alam, built of brick faced with stones, and containing inscriptions from other buildings : a wall, the praying station, and a mosque called the Masjid-i-Kazi Nur. Close to the tomb of Hazrat Nur Kutb Alam is a single domed building said to be the birthplace of his grandson and resort to which is believed to be efficacious for the forgiveness of sins and the casting out of evil spirits. Great numbers of people resort to it to participate in these benefits or to witness the spectacle of the casting out of evil spirits.

As at the *Bari dargah*, hospitality is offered to all visitors and the shrine is a place of resort of pilgrims and *fakirs* from all parts of India. Two copper drums are to be seen lying near the *musafir khana* (guest house) said to have been presented by Nawāb Kasim Khan Nazim of Bengal for use as gongs to call visitors at meal times.

The saint Ala-ul-Huq was the spiritual son of the saint Akhi Serājaddīn whom tradition says he served with such humility that he allowed the hot cooking pot of his spiritual father to be carried on his head so that he became bald. Akhi Serājaddīn had become so enfeebled by the hardships of repeated journeys to Mecca that he had to be carried about and served with meals at irregular times whilst journeying, thus necessitating this service on the part of Ala-ul-Huq. Ala-ul-Huq was himself famous for his lavish generosity and was banished to Sonargaon for two years as the king suspected that he was assisted by his father who was head of the treasury. His own explanation was that he did not spend a tenth part of what his Makhdum Akhi possessed. His son, the famous Nur Kutb Alam, was equally famous for menial acts of service to his father.

Golden
mosque.

A short distance further up the road and on the same side of it is the Kutubsahi mosque built in the year 1584. It is locally

known as the *Sona masjid*, or the golden mosque, possibly on account of the crown of its minarets being glazed a yellow colour. It is built of stone and measures 82' by 37', the roofing consisting of 10 domes.

Just beyond this mosque is the Eklākhi Mausoleum. It is a brick building surmounted by a single dome; the outer dimensions are 78 by 48 feet, the walls are 13 feet thick and the internal diameter is 48 feet. The outer walls are ornamented with carved bricks and over the entrance is a stone carved with a Hindu idol and slightly defaced. The inner room under the dome is octagonal in shape and light is obtained through four doors.

Eklākhi
Mauso-
leum

There are three tombs inside; those of Sultan Jalāl-addīn, of his wife and of his son Sultan Ahmed Shāh. There are two stone posts at the head of the tombs of Jalāl-addīn and Ahmed Shāh of which the latter projects slightly above the tomb, a sign of death by martyrdom. It dates from the beginning of the 15th century and owes its name to the supposed cost of its construction.

A mile further along the road is an old bridge in the brick work of which underneath, is to be seen a carving of the elephant god Ganesh.

A mile past the bridge and on the right hand side of the road is the Adinah mosque. This famous mosque built by Sikandar Shāh in the year 1374 is by far the most celebrated building in this part of India and is described as the most remarkable example which exists of Pathan architecture. Ferguson says that the ground plan and dimensions are exactly similar to those of the great mosque at Damascus.

Adinah
mosque

The outer walls of brick enclosed a quadrangular space 500 feet long north and south, by 300 feet wide east and west. Of these walls, the northern, eastern and southern were pierced with windows: the western wall had no opening, but a chamber containing the tomb of Sikandar Shāh projected from it on the outside just beyond and north of the centre of the wall. Inside and following the outer walls, with which they were connected by spring arches, was a series of cloisters enclosing an open quadrangle. The eastern cloisters through which, by an insignificant door, the building was entered, were 38 feet wide from outer wall to inner court. This space was subdivided by means of brick arches on stone pillars into 127 squares, each of which was covered by a small dome 20 feet high. The northern and southern cloisters were constructed on the same pattern, but being shorter contained only

49 squares similarly covered with domes. The innermost squares opened on to the inner quadrangle by arches. The western side of the quadrangle was the mosque proper, the inside of the western wall having the usual niches.

In the centre of this side was the nave of the mosque with the pulpit. It was 64 feet from east to west and 32 feet from north to south and was surmounted by a dome, of which the height from the floor to the centre was 62 feet. South of the nave, and connected with it by arches, were cloisters similar to those of the other sides of the building. In these the common people worshipped: north of the nave, and similarly connected with it, were cloisters carried to a greater height, the pillars of which supported a floor at a height of eight feet from the ground level. This platform called the *Badshah-ka-Takht* (the royal platform) was 40 feet wide and 80 feet long. The niches in its western wall were four in number and there were two doors, communicating directly to the chamber of Sikandar's tomb. This chamber, 36 feet square, which was covered by nine domes, was on the same level as the royal platform to which it gave access. It was built on a plinth, eight feet high, there being stone steps to the ground level.

The portions of the building which now exist are the outer walls, the royal platform with its domes, the pulpit and a part of the outer chamber. These have been restored as far as possible and the rest of the enclosed space turfed, the windows being partially bricked up to prevent the entrance of cattle. A small opening has also been made on the ground level near the royal platform.

The western wall of the nave and the royal platform is faced with polished black stone beautifully carved, and ornamented with texts from the Koran; the outer chamber is also largely of black stone, and there is an inscription which ascribes the erection of the mosque in 1374 to Sikandar. The brick work, more particularly of the western wall, is highly carved, the censer ornament predominating. On the stone work can be easily seen in places the remains of Hindu carvings, the figures of men and animals having been roughly chipped off by the Mahomedan masons. The only complete Hindu carved stone now to be seen is that forming the drain on the eastern side. It is in the shape of an elephant. It is curious to note that under the steps of the pulpit there was a defaced idol and it has been suggested that the site is that of an old Hindu temple.

About a mile east of the Adinah mosque are the remains of the building known as the Sātāisghar, said to have been part of the palace of Sikandar. They consist of two small ruins on the banks of a tank, and the arrangement of the pipes for conveying water still visible in them suggest that they were bath houses.

To the east of the Sātāisghar is a tank called Rohat Bank in which are the remains of two buildings connected by bridges: another tank south-east of Sātāisghar is called the Nāsir Shahi dighi and it may have been dug in the reign of Sultan Muzaffar Mahomed Shāh in the middle of the 15th century.

Pichhil.—A village eight miles north-west of English Bāzār near Gangarampur containing traces of old buildings, said to have been a residence of Lakshman Sen. Cunningham found an inscription here bearing date 1249 A. D.

Rohanpur.—A village some thirty miles south of English Bāzār situated on the Purnabhābā just above its junction with the Mahānandā. It is a place of considerable trade in the rice season and large quantities of rice pass through it, from Dinājpur to *diāra* tracts. It is well served for communications being a station on the Katthar-Godagāri line and a calling station of the Lālgolā steamer service.

Sibganj.—A large village with many brick houses on the English Bāzār-Nawābganj road 12 miles from Nawābganj. It was formerly the site of a Munsifi and is famous for its silk cloths, probably the best now produced in Bengal. It is two miles from Tārtipur, a jute trading centre on the Paglā.

Tanda or Tanra.—An old capital of Bengal to which the royal seat was transferred by Sulaiman Kerani in 1564 on account of the unhealthiness of Gaur itself. It is supposed to have been a *char* of the Ganges to the south-west of Gaur, though the name is still borne by a piece of land near Lakhimpur on the Rājmahāl road. It continued to be the headquarters of the kingdom till the middle of the following century and Shāh Sujā was defeated in 1660 in its vicinity by Mir Jumla, Aurangzeb's general. The place continued to be used by the Moghul Governors till the time of Raja Man Singh. The *char* on which the town was, has been completely swept away by the river.

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